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Intelligence Information Cable• PRIORITY 108a
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DIST 1 SEPTEMBER 1967.

COUNTRY NORTH VIETNAM

DOI 3 - 8 AUGUST 1967

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs
(C)

SUBJECT ROAD CONDITIONS AND BOMBING EFFECTS IN THE VICINITY OF HANOI

ACQ

• FIELD NO.

SOURCE

EO 12958
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SUMMARY. DURING THE PERIOD 3-8 AUGUST 1967, MEMBERS OF THE FIFTH RUSSELL TRIBUNAL INVESTIGATION TEAM WERE EXCORTEED TO CITIES IN THE VICINITY OF HANOI TO WITNESS THE BOMB DAMAGE. ALL OF THEIR TRAVELING WAS DONE AT NIGHT BY AUTOMOBILE. THE ROADS OVER WHICH THEY TRAVELED WERE IN A BAD STATE OF REPAIR AND IN MANY PLACES COULD NOT BE USED BY A

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VEHICLE LARGER THAN A SMALL TRUCK. A VIETNAMESE OFFICIAL SAID THAT ROADS IN THE AREA SURROUNDING NAM DINH CITY WERE SO BAD THAT IT WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR SAM MISSILE TRANSPORTERS TO MOVE FROM PLACE TO PLACE. END OF SUMMARY.

1. IN EARLY AUGUST SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE FIFTH RUSSELL TRIBUNAL INVESTIGATION TEAM WERE TAKEN ON GUIDED TOURS OF BOMBED CITIES IN THE HANOI VICINITY. THE FIRST TRIP TOOK PLACE ON 3 AUGUST WHEN THE TRIBUNAL MEMBERS WERE DRIVEN FROM HANOI TO THE TOWN OF SON TAY NORTH WEST OF HANOI ON ROUTE 11A. THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED ON THIS TRIP BY COLONEL HA VAN LAU WHO HAD BEEN THE SENIOR NORTH VIETNAMESE REPRESENTATIVE AT THE RECENT STOCKHOLM PEACE CONFERENCE. THE TRIP WAS MADE AT NIGHT. ABOUT 10 KILOMETERS FROM HANOI THE GROUP PASSED TEN SAM MISSILE TRANSPORTERS WITH MISSILES WHICH WERE APPARENTLY STOPPED FOR REPAIRS TO THE TRANSPORTERS. IN THE AREA FROM 11-20 KILOMETERS FROM HANOI ON ROUTE 11A THERE WERE NUMEROUS CONVENTIONAL AAA INSTALLATIONS NEAR THE ROAD. ABOUT 22 KILOMETERS FROM HANOI THE ROAD WAS BADLY CRATERED NEAR A DAM WHICH APPEARED TO BE INTACT. THE GROUP WAS TAKEN TO BAT LAI VILLAGE, QUANG QAI DISTRICT, HA TAY PROVINCE WHICH THEY WERE TOLD HAD BEEN BOMBED WITH CLUSTER BOMB UNITS ON 26 JULY AND 1 AUGUST. NINE PERSONS WERE SAID TO HAVE BEEN KILLED AND 29 WOUNDED. THE VILLAGE WAS QUITE REMOTE AND HAD NO APPARENT

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MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE.

2. ON THE NIGHT OF 5 AUGUST THE GROUP WAS DRIVEN FROM HANOI TO NAM DINH CITY. THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED ON THIS TRIP BY PHAM VAN BAC, WHO IS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE VIETNAMESE WAR CRIMES INVESTIGATION TEAM IN HANOI AND ALSO A JUDGE IN THE CITY OF HANOI. THE ROAD BETWEEN HANOI AND NAM DINH WAS IN A VERY BAD STATE OF REPAIR BECAUSE OF BOMB DAMAGE AND IN SOME PLACES IT WAS NECESSARY TO DRIVE BESIDE THE FORMER ROADBED. THE GROUP SAW MEDIUM SIZED TRUCKS WHICH HAD BECOME STUCK TRYING TO PASS BOMB DAMAGE ON SOME OF THE STEEP CURVES BESIDE THE FORMER ROADBED. THE FOLLOWING MORNING PHAM VAN BAC DISCUSSED ROAD CONDITIONS WITH THE TRIBUNAL GROUP AND SAID THAT THE ROADS IN THE NAM DINH AREA WERE IN VERY BAD SHAPE AND THAT IT WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR THE SAM MISSILE TRANSPORTERS TO GET FROM PLACE TO PLACE.

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3. THE TRIBUNAL GROUP VISITED NAM DINH CITY ON 6 AUGUST. THEY WERE TOLD THAT 35-40 PER CENT OF THE TOWN HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY BOMBING AND THE GROUP AGREED WITH THIS ESTIMATE AFTER OBSERVING THE CITY.

DESCRIBED THE TOWN AS "EMPTY" AND SAID ALL LARGE HOUSES HAD EITHER BEEN DESTROYED OR DAMAGED. THE REMAINING INHABITANTS LOOKED TIRED AND DEPRESSED.) PHAM VAN BAC SAID THAT THE TOWN HAD A PEACETIME POPULATION OF 93,000 BUT DID NOT

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SAY WHERE THE FORMER INHABITANTS HAD BEEN RELOCATED. BAC SAID THAT 106 RESIDENTS OF NAM DINH HAD BEEN KILLED BY BOMBS IN 1965 AND 1966 AND THAT 34 HAD BEEN KILLED IN 1967. [REDACTED] DESPITE VIETNAMESE CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY, [REDACTED] THE TRIBUNAL MEMBERS PRIVATELY CONCLUDED THAT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES HAD NOT BEEN HEAVY IN NAM DINH.)

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4. ON THE NIGHT OF 8 AUGUST THE GROUP, STILL ACCOMPANIED BY PHAM VAN BAC, WAS DRIVEN FROM PHU LY CITY TO NINH BINH CITY. THE ROAD BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES CROSSES TAAM SONG DAY RIVER TWICE AND AT BOTH CROSSINGS THE BRIDGES HAD BEEN BOMBED OUT AND PONTOON BRIDGES WERE IN USE. AT THE FIRST CROSSING ABOUT 15 KILOMETERS FROM NINH BINH THE PONTOON BRIDGE WAS TWO LANE AND TRAFFIC WENT THROUGH WITH LITTLE DELAY. HOWEVER, THE PONTOON BRIDGE AT THE CROSSING ABOUT 10 KILOMETERS FROM NINH BINH WAS ONE LANE AND REPRESENTED A CONSIDERABLE BOTTLENECK.

5. THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD 3-8 AUGUST WHEN THE TRIBUNAL MEMBERS WERE TRAVELING BY CAR AT NIGHT THEY FREQUENTLY PASSED LABORERS WORKING ON THE ROADS. THEY WERE TOLD BY PHAM VAN BAC AND COLONEL HA VAN LAU THAT SPECIAL "SHOCK BRIGADES" HAD BEEN CREATED TO HANDLE ROAD DAMAGE. THESE BRIGADES ARE MADE UP OF PERSONS WHO LIVE IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF KEY ROADS AND THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE AVAILABLE FOR ROAD REPAIR WORK IMMEDIATELY AFTER A BOMBING ATTACK.

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MANY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SHOCK BRIGADES ARE LABORERS DURING THE DAY WHO WORK EXTRA HOURS AT NIGHT ON ROAD REPAIR. AN EFFORT IS MADE TO KEEP STOCKS FOR ROAD REPAIR NEAR THE PLACES THEY MAY BE NEEDED. THE TRIBUNAL MEMBERS FREQUENTLY HEARD EXPLOSIONS AT NIGHT AND THEIR VIETNAMESE ESCORTS CALMED THEIR FEARS BY EXPLAINING THAT THE SHOCK BRIGADES WERE BLASTING ROCK OUT OF NEARBY SMALL HILLS FOR USE ON THE ROADS. PILES OF ROCK FOR ROAD REPAIRS WERE ALONG THE ROAD AT REGULAR INTERVALS. ROAD DAMAGE SEEMED TO BE QUICKLY REPAIRED BUT THERE WERE NUMEROUS PLACES WHERE IT WAS OBVIOUS BECAUSE OF THE STEEPNESS OF THE SLOPE OR TIGHTNESS OF THE TURN THAT THE ROAD COULD NOT BE USED BY ANY VEHICLE LARGER THAN A SMALL TRUCK.

6. FIELD DISSEM: NONE.

7. HEADQUARTERS COMMENT: ADVANCE COPIES SENT ELECTRICALLY TO WHITE HOUSE, STATE, DIA, ARMY, NAVY, AIR, NIC, NSA, OCI.

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